

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to read one more letter from a real person in my district, another victim of the Gingrich shutdown philosophy.

Mr. Edwards: I used to live on welfare but I fought my way out of the system. I'm employed at the VA hospital in Temple, Texas as a certified surgical tech. I'm not on food stamps, AFDC or Medicaid anymore. I support my children and take care of them through my job which I am not being paid for. The check I was to receive on January 2 was for rent, electric bills, food and gas. My 9-year-old's birthday had to be put on hold until I start getting paid again. I wish they could have felt my heartbreak when I told him and he started to cry.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to pass a resolution to put the Government and decent, hardworking Federal employees back to work. We can do that if Mr. GINGRICH and the House Republicans will let us take 15 minutes to vote in favor of a clean continuing resolution.

NO COUNTERPROPOSAL RECEIVED IN BUDGET DEBATE

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting. The previous speaker and all the others, they all voted against the override. If you wanted to get this birthday party done, you want to help these people out, why do you not vote for the bills? It is that simple.

The President has vetoed Interior, which would open national parks; the Justice Department; Commerce VA; HUD; EPA. These are all real things that would have opened the government. And yes, there is plenty of time to continue debating these issues and these spending levels. If you did not like this year's appropriations, go for it next year. Try to put in more money. We know you like to spend. But the President had vetoed these things and we have not seen yet a counterproposal.

That is what we have been looking for since November a counterproposal. What I do think is I share your concern about the furloughed employees. I want them to go back to work. I am not against a CR. But what I wish is that you would have the same urgency about the \$20 billion a month we are spending in interest on the national debt. This money is going to be paid for by your children and my children. Let us show them the same compassion you pretend to show other groups.

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TAX BREAK: CROWN JEWEL OF THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

(Mr. MARKEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the budget negotiators finally got to the key issue in the budget debate:

whether or not we are going to provide a \$245 billion tax break largely for the rich in this country as part of the 7-year balanced budget plan.

The Republican Party considers the tax cut for the rich to be the crown jewel in their Contract With America, and they have promised to keep the Government shut down until we give this tax break to the rich. The crown jewel is a good metaphor, for without the tax cut for the rich, the contract will not sparkle, it will not shine. But it is a jewel at a great price. To pay it, we must cut student loans, we must slash Medicare, we must cut Medicaid, we must slash environmental programs.

The Gingrich budget promises 7 years of milk and honey and tax breaks for the rich, but 7 years of financial famine and locusts for the working-class people of our country.

FOCUS ON BALANCING THE BUDGET

(Mr. MCINNIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the gentleman's cute props and while I appreciate my colleague's earlier statements about the child that was crying, certainly we divert from the primary issue here, and that is to balance the budget for the Federal Government and focus on some short-term hardships.

We understand there are hardships out there. I have got a program that I am going to talk about on a 5-minute special order on how we can help on some of those, but do not let us lose focus on the most important issue facing this country in generations, and that is to balance this budget, to control Government spending. Remember, right now this Government spends \$30 million an hour more than it brings in, and if you want to talk about an impact on the children and the future of this country, it is handing them this credit card, the congressional voting card, which is accumulating that kind of debt. That is what is going to break the backbone of this country.

We can focus on these short-term hardships. We can do something about it. But until we address the long-term problem, we are not going to get anywhere.

BRING UP THE LINE-ITEM VETO

(Mr. KANJORSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I could not help but hear some of my colleagues on the other side engage in some rhetoric which I think is unfortunate at this time, I might say, on our side also. It sort of indicates where this impasse is starting to take this Congress, and I hope the American people

will give us a little sufferance here because if they do not, they may start to believe that we have defeated the success of representative democracy in America under the Constitution as we know it.

The fact of the matter is we have a fundamental philosophical disagreement here, and we may have to recognize we are not going to come to a conclusion on it. We may not get an agreement on reconciliation and balancing the budget.

But this country must go on. What I would suggest is there is a tool, although I disagree with the tool, that was passed by this House and by this Senate but not sent to the President, that would resolve this problem, and that is the line-item veto. If the conference committee will meet today, agree on a conference report between the House and the Senate, bring it back to this House and send it to the President so he can sign it, he will have the authority to take the objectionable parts out of the appropriations bills which are keeping this Government shut down.

LET US GET TO A REASONABLE BUDGET AGREEMENT

(Mr. GANSKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of hot air about tax cuts for the rich, tax cuts for the rich. Well, as many of the Members know, myself and another Member who is sitting in the body today earlier in the year worked hard to lower the tax cap for the \$500-per-child tax credit. The conference bill is currently at \$75,000 for a single earner and \$110,000 for a couple.

Most people would say that that is reasonable, especially if you look at the fact that in 1950 the average income-earner family in this country was sending 5 percent of their income to Washington for Federal taxes and today it is over 25 percent. Remember also the President himself introduced a bill that had some tax cuts in it.

So I think what we are working at now, and as we said all along in the continuing resolution, was that we would put everything on the table, the level of tax cuts. The President has his. We have ours. Let us get some numbers and come to an agreement.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. I have sat here and listened to my Republican colleagues from Georgia and from the panhandle of Florida talk about what they really want in a budget. Maybe they need to call home and ask how many of their seniors are not being

able to apply for Social Security or how many of their veterans are not getting the health care they need or being able to apply for veterans' pensions.

The Federal employees are not the only ones that are hurting. In Houston we have thousands of people who are hurting. The passport office, we have 10,000 applications for passports, and they expect to grow by a thousand a week, that are not being issued. That is hurting business people who want to go overseas and sell our products. The Meals on Wheels program in Houston, I was interested to hear my colleague from Missouri talk about they are delivering them today, and they are in Houston. They say they only have enough money for another week or the 3,500 meals in Houston will not be delivered for seniors. The VA medical center, as of today, is only supplying, the contractor is only supplying for the VA medical center on an as-needed basis, so veterans are not getting the health care they have earned in supporting our country.

There is absolutely no reason to keep the Federal Government closed because they cannot get what they want in negotiations. Let us continue the negotiations. Let us also continue for the folks who are paying the bill.

TAXPAYER RESOURCES BEING SQUANDERED

(Mr. POMEROY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, this morning's front page of the Washington Post quotes the Senate majority leader with a very succinct comment, one which finds broad agreement all across the State of North Dakota. It says, "People should work for their money."

Yet the House of Representatives, the majority specifically in the House of Representatives, has created a situation today where thousands and thousands of Federal workers are prohibited from coming to their place of employment and discharging their services to the American people. Yet they have been assured by the same majority that shuts them out from their desks that they will now be compensated for this time.

Now, what could be more ridiculous than that? Not letting them come to work but paying them for staying at home, what is the point? The point is an awful lot of people are being hurt, the taxpayers' resources are being shamelessly squandered.

The Senate Republicans and Senate Democrats alike have voted to put this Government back to work, and it is time the House go along.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The Chair would advise the

Members that Members are allowed one 1-minute speech during each legislative day. The Chair has notified other Members of that previously.

PRESIDENT HAS REDUCED THE DEFICIT

(Mr. POSHARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Speaker, I just want to reemphasize again, if I may, I hear various speakers coming up here and painting the President as the ogre with respect to balancing the budget, reducing the deficit.

I just want to point out that in 1992 this country was running a \$310 billion deficit per year. It went down to \$260 billion, to \$200 billion, and this year to \$161 billion.

This President, whom everyone accuses of being disingenuous about balancing the budget, has reduced the deficit \$150 billion in 3 years, whereas the budget that we are being told we should agree to here and pass goes from \$161 billion in this year to \$151 billion, back up to \$158 billion and down to \$126 billion in the third year. The President's budget? It is \$150 billion in 3 years. This budget that we are being told is a saving grace of America, \$35 billion in the same amount of time.

HOW TO REOPEN THE GOVERNMENT

(Mr. MANZULLO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, the House just voted a few minutes ago to override the President's veto of the Interior appropriations bill.

Whenever the President vetoes a bill, that mean he does not like it. But when the President vetoed the Interior appropriations bill, that meant that 130,000 Federal employees could have been working, 369 national parks would have been open, 500 national wildlife refuges would have been open, 155 national forests would have been open.

Let us get candid about this. Whenever the President vetoes a bill, he shuts down the Government. If the President is complaining about the Government being shut down, all he has to do is to sign the appropriations bill. That is what this process is about.

So, if you want the Government to be open, all the President has to do is to sign the bills, the appropriations bills that Congress has sent to him. It is that simple.

IT IS TIME TO RETURN TO SANITY

(Mr. MENENDEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I was listening to this debate on the floor,

and I decided to come down. I wanted to tell some of my radical friends, since I always hear them called liberal friends, it is time to stop using our Federal employees, who are our fellow citizens, American citizens, as hostages.

I feel like we are in the Iran hostage situation again. It is time to stop using Americans who depend upon those Federal employees as hostages, and it is time to stop asking them to be the ultimate sacrifice in this process.

The fact of the matter is you want to impose your will, your extreme agenda as the law of the land, and that is not the American way. It is about negotiation, it is about compromise. It is not about blackmail and threat, and that is what is at stake here.

We are discussing about deeply rooted principles. I know you have yours, and we have ours. But it is time to stop using Federal employees and the American citizens who depend upon their services as hostages, and it is time to take the gun away from the President, which is what you are doing, at his head; it is time to return to some sanity in this House and in this country.

AMERICA WANTS A BALANCED BUDGET

(Mr. WELDON of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, there you have it, we have been called gruesome, we have been called extreme, we have been called radical, we have been called just about every name in the book because we want to do something so extreme and so radical as to balance the budget using honest numbers.

People back home are saying to me, "Dave, if you can't do it, who will do it? And if we can't do it now, when will we do it?"

The time has arrived. The President is vetoing all of these bills that we put before him because we do not spend as much money as he wants to spend. Those are the bottom-line issues in his vetoes. He wants to spend more money than we want to spend.

We want to balance the budget. He has not presented a budget that balances. He has not presented to us a budget that, when we give it to the CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, and they analyze the numbers, it does not come to balance in 7 years. The American public wants the budget balanced.

WE MUST WORK OUT OUR DIFFERENCES

(Mr. HEFNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, I think the gentlemen are missing the point here. We are talking about a balanced